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ABSTRACT

Findings are presented of the responses of over 800 teachers to a questionnaire seeking opinions on (1) working conditions; (2) support and assistance from peers, administrators, and parents; (3) participation in decision making; and (4) reform proposals. Responses to the survey indicated that the majority of teachers (1) support many reform proposals, including professional career ladders and preservice examinations; (2) feel they do not have sufficient decision-making authority; (3) say they could improve their teaching by working more closely with their colleagues; (4) report they must often do without needed books, materials, and supplies; and (5) display a remarkable commonality about what teaching ought to be. Findings are displayed in tables that offer comparisons between the opinions of rural, urban, and suburban teachers, and experienced and beginning teachers. A copy of the survey quesionnaire is appended. (JD)

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Julia Koppich
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A View from the Classroom: California Teachers' Opinions on Working Conditions and School Reform Proposals

Julia Koppich
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March 1986

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Policy Analysis for California Education

Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) is a university-based research center focusing on issues of state educational policy and practice. PACE is located in the Schools of Education at the University of California, Berkeley and Stanford University. It is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and directed jointly by James W. Guthrie and Michael W. Kirst. PACE has expanded to include satellite centers in Sacramento and Southern California. These are directed by Gerald C. Hayward (Sacramento) and Allan R. Odden (University of Southern California).

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Introduction and Summary

This report resulted from an opinion survey of California teachers. The survey was conducted in the spring of 1985. Surveys were mailed to 1,100 California classroom teachers. Survey participants reflect a true cross-section of all California teachers. More than 70% of those surveyed returned completed questionnaires. This unusually high rate of return plus the representative nature of the survey sample make it possible to generalize survey conclusions to California teachers as a whole.

The survey sought teachers' opinions in four specific areas: (1) *Working Conditions*--Do teachers have the basic tools and conditions that enable them to do their jobs? (2) *Support*--Do teachers receive adequate and appropriate support and assistance from peers, administrators, and students' parents? (3) *Participation in Decision Making*--How much decision-making authority do teachers have in their classrooms and at their school sites? (4) *Reform Proposals*--How do teachers perceive school reforms, many of which directly affect what teachers do in their classrooms?

Teachers' opinions were gauged on the basis of responses to two types of survey questions: (1) fifty-eight multiple choice questions and (2) one open-ended essay question.

Teachers' responses to the multiple choice questions produced the following highlights:

1. Teachers support many reform proposals.

A. Four-fifths of teachers (80%) favor professional career ladders.

B. More than three-quarters of teachers (77%) support a pre-service test in basic reading, writing, and mathematics.

C. A majority of respondents (57%) believe that teachers should take a professional examination prior to credentialing.

2. Teachers do not believe they have the decision-making authority they need to do their jobs.

A. Nearly all teachers (96%) believe they should participate in determining what is taught at their school. Fewer than half of teachers (41%) report an opportunity for such participation.

B. Nearly all respondents (98%) agree that teachers and administrators should work together to establish student discipline policies. Fewer than half of teachers (42%) report they are presently involved in setting their schools' student discipline policies.

C. Nearly all teachers (98%) believe that administrators should consider teachers' preferences when making teaching assignments. Fewer than half of teachers (42%) report that their preferences are considered.

3. **California teachers believe they could improve their teaching by working more closely with their colleagues. However, most teachers report they are isolated from their colleagues.**

   A. Nearly nine of ten teachers (87%) believe they could improve their professional skills by observing their colleagues teach. Only 6% of teachers report they have an opportunity to observe their colleagues on a regular basis.

   B. More than three-quarters of teachers (77%) believe they could improve their teaching by having other teachers observe them and provide feedback. Just 3% of teachers report that their colleagues have an opportunity to watch them teach.

   C. More than nine of ten teachers (92%) would like their colleagues' help when problems arise with students or parents. Just a third of teachers (33%) report that their colleagues have an opportunity to offer such help.

4. **California teachers believe that school administration offers insufficient professional support.**

   A. Nearly all teachers (98%) believe that the principal should provide assistance when there are problems with parents or students. Slightly more than half of teachers (58%) believe that principals provide this assistance.

   B. More than nine of ten teachers (93%) report they want the administration to schedule time during the work day when teachers can talk to colleagues about professional matters. Less than one-seventh of teachers (14%) report that the administration schedules this time.

   C. Nearly all teachers (96%) believe that the administration should establish a formal system of help and support for new teachers. Just 15% of teachers report that such a system of help exists.

5. **One in four California teachers reports insufficient books, materials, and equipment.**

   A. More than one-fourth of teachers (27%) report they have insufficient numbers of textbooks.

   B. More than one quarter of teachers (26%) report they have insufficient instructional materials, such as paper, pencils, and supplementary books.

   C. One teacher in ten (10%) reports not having sufficient desks and chairs for the students.

6. **More than one in three California teachers report working at a second job.**

   A. Nearly four of ten California teachers (39%) report insufficient teaching salaries, and thus they hold second jobs.

   B. Half of all secondary teachers (50%) have a second job in addition to teaching.

7. **Most California teachers report they believe they receive inadequate support from their students' parents.**

   A. Fewer than four in ten teachers (38%) agree with the statement, "My students' parents support my efforts with reinforcement at home."

8. **California teachers' opinions on working conditions, reform proposals, and decision-making authority are virtually identical whether the teacher is working in an urban, rural, or suburban district; is an elementary or secondary teacher; or has taught for five years or twenty-five years.**

   A. When comparing urban, rural, and suburban teachers:

      i. There are no significant differences regarding teachers' opinions on the availability of books, supplies, and equipment or on reform proposals.

      ii. Urban, rural, and suburban teachers differ on only one facet of support: 40% of rural teachers report they have opportunities to help colleagues with problems associated with students or parents; only 28% of urban teachers report the availability of colleague support.

      iii. In the area of decision making, the survey found one statistically significant difference among urban, rural, and suburban teachers: Nearly half of rural teachers (49%) report they often participate in choosing curriculum; only 30% of urban teachers say they are involved in curriculum decisions.

   B. Comparing elementary and secondary teachers:

      i. In the area of books and facilities, elementary teachers report slightly greater availability of desks, textbooks, supplementary materials, and faculty rooms; typewriters and private telephones are somewhat more accessible to secondary teachers.

      ii. Elementary and secondary teachers share similar opinions about teachers' decision-making authority. However, secondary teachers report slightly greater participation in selecting new teachers.

      iii. Secondary teachers offer somewhat stronger support than elementary teachers for professional exams, merit pay, peer evaluation, and career ladders.

C. When comparing experienced teachers to new teachers (those with five years or less of teaching experience):

i. Experienced teachers are slightly more receptive to reform proposals.

ii. Experienced teachers are slightly less satisfied than new teachers with the adequacy of faculty rooms and the availability of professional support services.

iii. Length of teaching experience has no effect on teachers' opinions in any other area encompassed by the survey.

Open-ended Response

More than 80% of teachers responded to the open-ended question. Three responses appeared on more than 100 surveys: (1) class sizes are too high, (2) salaries are too low, and (3) administrative support is neither consistent nor sufficiently strong.

Results of this survey contradict any notion that teachers resist change. Teachers' responses suggested they are eager to embrace many reform proposals and are anxious to be part of the reform process.

One survey result deserves particular mention. The survey was mailed to teachers in May, the month when teachers' class and school reponsibilities are heaviest. Considering the timing of the survey, only a moderate return rate was expected. Professional survey firms report that a 15-20% rate of return on a mail survey is typical. Yet despite the timing, more than 70% of teachers surveyed returned completed questionnaires. Many took the time to write on the survey, "Thank you for asking my opinion."

A note of caution before delving into the survey results: some of the statistics regarding current conditions at first appear encouraging. Closer examination of these same statistics reveals serious school problems. For example, teaching materials seem to be adequate. Only 15% of teachers report they lack basic instructional materials. However, that same statistic translates into more than half a million California school children who are deprived of basic learning tools.

Working Conditions

Teachers' working conditions vary from district to district and from school to school. Some California teachers work under conditions that are quite conducive to teaching and learning; many others do not. This survey found that one million California school children are taught by teachers who report inadequate instructional materials, insufficient professional support, lack of preparation time, and oversized classes.

Textbooks, Equipment, and other Instructional Materials

1. More than one quarter of teachers (27%) report they do not have enough textbooks.

2. More than one teacher in four (26%) have insufficient basic teaching materials, such as paper, pencils, and supplementary books.

3. Nearly half of all teachers (44%) report they spend more than $100 of their own money each year on classroom materials and supplies.

4. More than one-fourth of teachers (27%) report they do not have access to a typewriter at school.

5. One-fifth of teachers (20%) report they do not have access to audio-visual equipment.

6. One teacher in ten (10%) reports not having enough desks and chairs in the classsroom.

On the textbook question, teachers wrote comments such as, "I have enough books, but they're so old they're practically useless," and "We have enough books, but not always when we need them." About typewriters, one teacher wrote, "We have a typewriter, but it's a donated, prehistoric variety." Wrote another, "Our typewriter is fine as long as you don't want to type anything that has a '5' in it. That key doesn't work!" Regarding desks and chairs, several teachers wrote comments like, "I have enough [chairs] only because I scrounge them myself from the warehouse," and "I have enough [chairs] but they're so old and rickety, I'm afraid some child is going to get hurt."

Class Size

Teachers report that their classes are too large. In response to the essay question, "What one change do you believe could most improve your teaching situation?" more than 130 of 800 teachers responding wrote, "Lower my class size."

1. Nearly three-quarters of elementary teachers (74%) report they teach between 26 and 50 students per day in a self-contained classroom.

2. Among secondary teachers, 40% report they teach 100 to 150 students each day; 26% teach 151 to 200 students a day.

3. One-quarter of all teachers (25%) report that 10% or more of their students are limited or non-English speaking.

4. More than one third of teachers (34%) report that at least 10% of their students receive special education services.

Teachers wrote of their inability to individualize, of feelings of frustration, of being more like a babysitter than a teacher, and of sheer exhaustion brought on by oversized classes.

Wrote one teacher, "A much lower [class size] (perhaps 15-20 students) would make me a far more effective, innovative, dynamic, and contented teacher and would be the single greatest benefit to my students. With class sizes reduced...my longevity as a teacher would be increased, professional growth would be enhanced, and, most importantly, more individualized instruction of my students would occur."

Planning Time and Facilities

1. More than one-third of all teachers (35%) report not having a preparation period during the workday.

2. More than six of ten elementary teachers (63%) report no preparation time during the workday.

3. When asked if their school has an adequate room set aside for teachers to meet and talk with one another, 29% of teachers replied, "no."

4. Nearly half of all teachers (47%) report not having access to a private telephone at school. Teachers often need to phone their students' parents. For nearly one of two teachers, no private telephone is available at school.

Nonteaching Workload

1. Nearly one-half of all teachers (46%) report they spend eleven hours a week or more making lesson plans, grading papers, and talking with parents.

2. More than one-third of teachers (38%) spend an additional eleven-hours-plus each week doing clerical work and record keeping unrelated to actual classroom activities.

3. Nearly a third of secondary teachers (30%) report they must prepare for three entirely different courses each day.

4. Nearly half of secondary teachers (44%) report they must prepare for four or more different courses each day.

Salaries and Second Jobs

This survey did not emphasize the issue of teacher salaries. Nevertheless, more than 100 of 800 survey respondents listed increased salaries as the one change that could most improve their teaching situations. Significantly, on the survey question that asked about second jobs, nearly four of ten teachers (39%) reported they must have second jobs in order to make financial ends meet. Half of secondary teachers (50%) say they must have second jobs.

Interruptions and Substitutes

Two additional survey statistics which do not fall into the previously listed sub-categories are useful in assessing teachers' working conditions.

Interruptions. More than one-third of teachers (36%) report that their time in the classroom with students is often interrupted by monitors bringing in notices, announcements over the school's public address system, and similar distractions.

Substitutes. More than 40% of teachers (42%) report that it is difficult to maintain the instructional program with the kinds of substitutes provided when teachers are absent.

Support Services

Teachers report that their success depends, in part, on the support they receive from colleagues, administrators, specialists, and parents. Almost unanimously teachers express a desire to:

1. Observe and be observed by other teachers.
2. Work with administrators who offer support in solving on-the-job problems.
3. Receive assistance from specialists, such as psychologists and social workers.
4. Improve communication with parents.

Teachers also report that these types of support are often unavailable.

Colleague Support

1. Nearly nine of ten teachers (87%) report they could improve their teaching by observing other teachers. Only 6% of teachers say they have an opportunity to observe their colleagues on a regular basis.
2. More than three-quarters of teachers (77%) believe they can enhance their skills by having other teachers observe them and provide feedback. Just 3% of teachers report that their colleagues have an opportunity to spend time watching them teach.
3. More than ninety percent of teachers (92%) would like their colleagues' help when there are problems with parents or students. Only a third of teachers (33%) report that their colleagues have an opportunity to offer assistance with parent or student problems.

Administrative Support

1. Nearly all teachers (93%) want the administration to schedule time during the workday when teachers can talk to their colleagues about professional matters. Less than one-seventh of teachers (14%) report they have such time.
2. Teachers, by 99-1%, believe that the principal should provide supportive assistance when there are problems with parents or students. Yet only slightly more than half of teachers (58%) believe that the principals at their schools provide such assistance.
3. Nearly all teachers (96%) believe that the administration should establish a formal system of help and support for new teachers. Just 15% of teachers report the existence of such a system of help.
4. Slightly over half of California teachers (54%) believe that the administrative system used to evaluate teachers' performance is fair. Only one of two teachers (52%) believes that the evaluator knows teachers' specific strengths and

weaknesses. Less than half of teachers (47%) believe that the administration provides useful feedback after observing teachers.

5. Nearly all teachers (96%) believe that the administration should support teachers' educational innovations with time and money. Only 15% of teachers report that innovation at their school is supported with time and money.

6. Nearly three-quarters of teachers (72%) report they are treated with dignity and respect by the site administration. However, many teachers wrote, "Our principal has forgotten what it's like to be in the classroom."

Specialists' Support

1. More than one-fifth of teachers (22%) report that support services of other professionals, such as psychologists, social workers, and counselors, are not available to assist when teachers have specific problems with students.

Parent Support

1. Fewer than four in ten teachers (38%) agree with the statement, "My students' parents support my efforts with reinforcement at home." Reinforcement means helping with homework, reading to young children, or just talking with children about the events of the school day.

2. A majority of California teachers (63%) believe that parents value what teachers do in the classroom.

Participation in Decision Making

Teachers report they have little professional decision-making authority. *This survey found that the strongest correlation between what teachers believe should happen and what actually does happen is in the area of classroom furniture arrangement.* On issues of greater professional substance--deciding what is taught, establishing school routines, or directing on-the-job training--teachers report little involvement. Yet, almost all teachers report a strong desire for increased participation in decision making.

The Instructional Program

1. More than nine of ten teachers (96%) believe they should participate in determining what is taught at their schools. Fewer than half of teachers (41%) report an opportunity for such participation.

2. Teachers agree nearly unanimously (99%) that they should be involved in deciding which textbooks are used. Less than three-quarters of teachers (71%) report they help choose textbooks.

3. Nearly all teachers (98%) believe that the administration should consider teachers' preferences in making teaching assignments. Fewer than half of teachers (42%) report that their preferences are considered.

4. By 96-4%, teachers agree they should participate in determining professional development, or in-service, courses. Only one-fifth of teachers (22%) report they have an opportunity to help determine which in-service courses are offered.

School Policies

1. When asked if the faculty should be involved in setting school routines, like bell schedules, 85% of California teachers said they should. Just slightly over one-quarter of teachers (26%) said they actually have a voice in setting their schools' student routines.

2. Nearly all teachers (98%) believe that teachers and administrators should work together to establish student discipline policies. Fewer than half of teachers (42%) report they are involved in setting their schools' discipline policies.

3. More than eight of ten teachers (84%) believe they should participate in determining assignment of students to teachers' classes. Fewer than one-third of teachers (28%) report that level of involvement.

4. More than three-quarters of California teachers (78%) agree they should "participate in selecting new teachers to come to my school." Only 15% of teachers report they are consulted in this matter.

5. Nearly three-quarters of all teachers (72%) believe that faculty meetings should not simply be sessions in which the principal makes announcements and reads memos. Yet nearly six in ten teachers (58%) report that faculty meetings are primarily memo reading sessions.

Reform Proposals

Results of this survey provide evidence that teachers endorse many reform proposals. They are divided about some proposals, but reject none out-of-hand. Teachers overwhelmingly favor professional career ladders, enthusiastically support pre-service examinations, and are more cautious on the issues of merit pay and peer review.

Pre-Service Examinations

1. More than three-quarters of teachers (77%) believe that a test in basic reading, writing, and mathematics should be required before one is certified to teach.

2. A majority of teachers (57%) agree with the statement, "Teachers should take a professional exam (like the bar exam or medical boards) before they are credentialed."

Pay Incentive Plans

1. Eight of ten teachers (80%) favor a professional career ladder which allows teachers to earn more money as they take on diversified professional responsibilities.

2. When asked if teachers' salaries should be related in part to teachers' effectiveness, 43% of teachers answered, "yes." Several respondents wrote comments such as, "I would be willing to consider merit pay if I knew how 'merit' was to be determined."

3. Seven of ten teachers (70%) oppose higher salaries for teachers in fields of shortage.

Peer Review

1. One-third of teachers (33%) believe that teachers should participate in the evaluation of their colleagues; 44% do not agree; 23% are undecided.

Effects of School Location, Grade Level, and Teaching Experience on Teachers' Opinions

California teachers are of one mind with respect to working conditions, reform proposals, and participation in decision making. Variations among teachers in school location, grade level taught, and length of classroom experience have little influence on teacher attitudes. All teachers--whether they work in urban, rural, or suburban districts; teach elementary or secondary school; or have taught for five years or twenty-five years--share similar concerns and expectations regarding their profession.

Urban, Rural, and Suburban Teachers

Urban, rural, and suburban teachers report remarkably similar opinions on working conditions, participation in decision making, and reform proposals (See Appendix A, Tables 1, 4, and 7). The only differences are:

1. Almost one-half of rural teachers (49%) report they often participate in choosing curriculum. Only one in three urban teachers (30%) reports involvement in curriculum choice.

2. More than one-fourth of rural teachers (26%) participate in hiring new teachers. Just 7% of urban teachers are involved in the hiring process.

Elementary versus Secondary Teachers

Elementary and secondary teachers generally agree on policy matters, working conditions, and participation in decision making (See Appendix A, Tables 2, 5, and 8). Differences, though slight, are reported in the following areas:

1. On working conditions, elementary teachers report slightly greater availability of desks, textbooks, supplementary materials, and a faculty room. Typewriters and private telephones are somewhat more accessible to secondary teachers.

2. Elementary teachers report slightly greater decision-making authority than do secondary teachers in assigning students to individual teachers' classes, setting school routines, establishing student discipline policies, and determining inservice activities. Secondary teachers report more participation than their elementary colleagues in selecting new teachers.

3. Secondary teachers offer slightly stronger support for professional exams, merit pay, peer evaluation, and professional career ladders.

Teaching Experience

The survey uncovered few differences in teachers' opinions when veteran teachers are compared with beginners (those who have five years or less of classroom experience).

(See Appendix A, Tables 3, 6, and 9.) Differences that did appear in survey results include:

1. Experienced teachers are less satisfied than new teachers with the adequacy of faculty rooms and the availability of professional support services.

2. Experienced teachers are more receptive to reform proposals than new teachers.

Conclusion

More than 800 California teachers took the time to respond to a 13-page survey containing 58 multiple choice questions and one open-ended question. That rate of return--more than 70%--is a clear indication of teachers' desire to be heard and to be involved in the education reform process.

It would have been easy for teachers simply to answer the questions by indicating, "I need more of everything," hoping that more of something would be forthcoming. Likewise, it might have been comfortable for teachers to respond to the education reform questions with a flat, "nothing needs to be changed." Teachers took neither the easy nor the comfortable route.

The story told by teachers' survey responses produces a virtual roadmap for policy makers:

1. Teachers support many reform proposals, including professional career ladders and pre-service examinations.

2. Teachers report they do not have sufficient decision-making authority. With few exceptions, teachers contend they are denied the power to make those on-the-job decisions that affect what happens in the classroom.

3. Teachers say they could improve their teaching by working more closely with their colleagues, but most teachers report they are professionally isolated.

4. Working conditions vary across the state, but many teachers report they must do without needed books, materials, and supplies.

5. Teachers across the state display a remarkable commonality about what teaching ought to be. Teachers' opinions on reform proposals, decision making, support, and working conditions are generally not related to grade level taught, length of classroom experience, or geographic location.

Teachers are specific in reporting the changes they want, including: increased opportunities for collegial interaction, greater respect as professionals, more support from parents and administrators, greater participation in decision-making processes, higher salaries, better-equipped schools, smaller classes, and more preparation time.

When asked to cite the most pressing immediate problems, teachers responded: (1) class sizes are too high, (2) salaries are too low, and (3) administrative support is neither consistent nor strong.

For some teachers, on-the-job problems threaten to drive them out of the classroom. Several teachers wrote, "I love what I do, but if things don't change, I'm going to be forced to leave the profession."

As one teacher put it, "One person in a classroom can do only so much, no matter how hard they [sic] try. If you have any perfectionism in your soul or if you want every child to be a winner, this is no longer the game to get into because sheer exhaustion will win in the end."

Yet, despite frustrations they expressed with their jobs, the vast majority of teachers maintain that what they do is important. When asked if they feel they are making a significant difference in their students' lives, 85% of teachers replied, "Yes."

This survey was initiated with no preconceptions about results. Few predictors of outcomes were available as little research has been done to solicit teachers' opinions on issues that teachers believe are crucial to the teaching profession. A foundation was laid by Metropolitan Life with its comprehensive national 1984 Survey of the American Teacher. That survey found that teachers are:

> a group of serious professionals. They are not wedded to the status quo. Teachers seek serious and responsible change and are willing to make personal sacrifices and take on more work themselves to make these changes successful.

This report, "A View from the Classroom," corroborates the Metropolitan Life survey results. Moreover, these new findings portray a frustrated profession on the brink of change. Teachers find little correlation between what their professional knowledge and expertise tell them and their actual experiences in the classroom. A common thread of "purpose" runs through teachers as a group. That commonality of attitude on working conditions, support, participation in decision making, and reform proposals cuts across geography, grade levels, and length of teaching experience.

Policy Recommendations

What implications do these survey findings have for improving education in California's public schools? Teachers' responses to survey questions suggest that teachers recognize the problems of schools and understand potential solutions. Teachers also contend that, though they want to be involved in education reform, their professional opinions have largely been ignored. California schools will not improve without substantial improvement in teachers' working conditions. The challenge to policy makers is to use teachers, the untapped resource, to bring about school change.

Setting the Stage

This survey began with four questions:

1. Do teachers have the basic tools to do their jobs?
2. Do teachers receive adequate and appropriate support and assistance from peers and school administrators?
3. How much decision-making authority do teachers have in their own classrooms and at school sites?
4. How do teachers perceive school reforms?

Teachers responded that:

1. Many of them lack the basic tools and conditions they need.
2. Many of them do not receive adequate and appropriate peer and administrative support or assistance.
3. Teachers have little, if any, decision-making authority.
4. Teachers support many school reforms.

Several policy recommendations flow directly from these survey results. *The overarching theme of these recommendations is that schools need to be fundamentally restructured.* This restructuring will cost money. The next steps in a successful education reform movement will require another serious infusion of public dollars.

Teachers' survey responses provide the basis for the recommendations outlined below. These recommendations should be viewed as building blocks. Each recommendation may not, of itself, bring about significant change. However, taken together, the recommendations support one another and can produce substantial change in teaching and in the quality of public education.

Recommendation 1: Teachers' Working Conditions Must Be Improved

Teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. As California schools begin to expect more of their students, the people entrusted with the responsibility for teaching those students must have the basic supplies and conditions necessary for effective education.

A. Every teacher must have sufficient textbooks (of recent vintage), supplementary materials, and adequate classroom furniture.

B. Every teacher must have access to a worksite typewriter, copying machine, and private telephone.

C. Every school must have a room set aside for teachers to use for planning and discussion.

D. Instructional time must be free from interruptions by announcements or message bearers.

E. All teachers must have preparation time during the workday.

F. Class sizes must be reduced. Teachers report that large class sizes are the single greatest impediment to effective instruction. California, with the highest class sizes in the country, must establish a program to systematically reduce class sizes. An appropriate goal toward which to strive is the national class size average of 18 students per class.

G. Salaries much be increased.

Recommendation 2: An Effective System of Support Among Teachers Must Be Developed

Teachers desire greater collegial interaction. Such programs, however, are not currently supported by schools.

A. Time must be built into the school program for teachers to observe their colleagues at work and be observed by them. A formal system of collegial interaction might begin as an outgrowth of the state's existing mentor teacher program.

B. Programs must be developed to provide new teachers with support and guidance. The professional expertise of veteran teachers should be used to assist beginning teachers, either through the existing mentor teacher program or by establishing a new master teacher program.

Recommendation 3: School Administrators Must Be Trained to Work Collegially with Teachers

School administrators must be retrained to work with teachers as colleagues. Just as private sector corporations are moving away from the top-down approach to decision making, so, too, should schools change their management approach.

A. Administrators must involve teachers in making school site decisions on matters such as descipline policies, curriculum, and bell schedules.

B. Teacher evaluation systems must be revamped. As long as school administrators are the primary evaluators of teachers, administrators must be retrained to use a new system of objective professional performance assessment.

Recommendation 4: Teachers Must Have Greater Decision-Making Authority

Literature on organizational dynamics supports the truism that employees are more productive if they are involved in making decisions that affect their work lives. More importantly, education is both an art and a science. Much research has been done and continues in an effort to determine what makes a teacher successful. However, there is simply not enough knowledge to prescribe all the components of successful teaching and, therefore, successful education. What is known is that a teacher's own experience and professional judgement are keys to good school programs.

A. Teachers must be given authority in determining what is taught and which textbooks are used to teach it.

B. Teachers must have the dominant authority in determining the content and form of inservice courses. Workshops and curriculum sessions should take place during the school day or as paid employment on weekends or during summers, rather than using "tired time" at the end of a long teaching day.

C. Teachers must be part of the decision-making process to establish school routines, like bell schedules and student discipline policies.

Recommendation 5: New Education Reform Plans Must Take Advantage of Teachers' Professional Opinions

Teachers want change in their profession. They favor many of the proposals for education reform that have been suggested but not yet implemented.

A. A pre-service professional exam, much like the bar exam or medical boards, should be required prior to credentialing.

B. Salaries must be increased. Teacher salaries must become competitive with the salaries in other professions that require a level of academic and professional preparation similar to teaching.

C. A professional career ladder should be established. Successful teachers must be encouraged to remain in the classroom. A substantial proportion of that encouragement should come in the form of professional career ladders, which allow teachers to earn higher salaries as they assume additional, diversified professional responsibilities. These responsibilities may include training new teachers, developing improved curriculum, or identifying better techniques for parent involvement.

D. An experimental peer evaluation system should be developed. We believe teachers' concerns about peer review in large measure stem from a lack of information about how a peer evaluation system would operate. Teachers' dissatisfaction with the current system of evaluation leads us to propose that the state, in consultation with teachers, develop an experimental peer review system to be piloted in a few selected school districts.

Appendix A

Comparison of Opinion

Table 1

Percentage of Teachers Reporting Adequate Working Conditions, Rural v. Suburban v. Urban Teachers*

	Rural Teachers Reporting YES	Suburban Teachers Reporting YES	Urban Teachers Reporting YES
Chairs and desks	90%	87%	87%
Textbooks	91	66	66
Basic learning materials	74	74	66
Adequate staff room	69	72	75
Typewriter	71	72	70
Duplicating equipment	91	89	85
Access to telephone	53	53	57
Audio-visual equipment	82	77	76
Own classroom	84	89	85
Professional support services such as psychologists	78	81	73

* No significant differences at < 0.05 level.

Table 2

Percentage of Teachers Reporting Adequate Working Conditions, Elementary v. Secondary Teachers

	Elementary Teachers Responding YES	Secondary Teachers Responding YES
Chairs and desks	91%	85%*
Textbooks	71	65*
Basic learning materials	77	67*
Adequate staff room	75	68*
Typewriter	64	77*
Duplicating equipment	88	88
Access to telephone	47	60*
Audio-visual equipment	79	79
Own classroom	91	82*
Professional support services such as psychologists	78	78

* Significant differences at < 0.05 level.

Table 3

Percentage of Teachers Reporting Adequate Working Conditions, Veteran v. New Teachers

	Veteran† Teachers Responding YES	New†† Teachers Responding YES
Chairs and desks	89%	92%
Textbooks	69	66
Basic learning materials	73	72
Adequate staff room	71	81*
Typewriter	71	69
Duplicating equipment	90	90
Access to telephone	64	53
Audio-visual equipment	80	75
Own classroom	86	86
Professional support services such as psychologists	76	90*

† Eleven or more years teaching.
†† Less than 5 years teaching.
* Significant differences at < 0.05 level.

Table 4

Percentage of Teachers Who Report Never or Rarely Participating in Decision Making, Rural v. Suburban v. Urban Teachers

Determining:	Rural Teachers	Suburban Teachers	Urban Teachers
What should be taught	13%	19%	21%*
Textbooks	2	7	12*
Classroom furniture arrangement	2	1	2
Assignment of students to individual teachers' classes	35	41	40
Setting student routines such as bell schedules	37	44	44
Establishing student discipline policies	24	27	23
Determining inservice programs	39	37	39
Selecting new teachers	50	70	84*

* Significant differences at < 0.05 level.

Table 5

Percentage of Teachers Who Report Never or Rarely Participating in Decision Making, Elementary v. Secondary Teachers

Determining:	Elementary Teachers	Secondary Teachers
What should be taught	17%	18%
Textbooks	7	7
Classroom furniture arrangement	1	2
Assignment of students to individual teachers' classes	24	51*
Setting student routines such as bell schedules	39	51*
Establishing student discipline policies	19	27*
Determining inservice activities	33	41*
Selecting new teachers	72	61*

* Significant differences at <0.05 level.

Table 6

Percentage of Teachers Who Report Never or Rarely Participating in Decision Making, Veteran v. New Teachers*

Determining:	Veteran† Teachers	New†† Teachers
What should be taught	42%	40%
Textbooks	69	67
Classroom furniture arrangement	93	85
Assignment of students to individual teachers' classes	28	25
Setting student routines such as bell schedules	26	21
Establishing student discipline policies	43	45
Determining inservice programs	24	19
Selecting new teachers	17	8

† Eleven or more years teaching.
†† Less than 5 years teaching.
* No significant differences at < 0.05 level.

Table 7

Percentage of Teachers Who Report Strong Support for Reform Proposals, Rural v. Suburban v. Urban Teachers*

	Rural Teachers	Suburban Teachers	Urban Teachers
Career ladders	84%	79%	80%
Testing teachers on basic skills	79	74	76
Professional exams for credentialing	57	59	55
Relate salaries to teachers' effectiveness	45	47	38
Peer evaluation	34	33	33
Extra pay for fields of shortage	14	20	18

* No significant differences at < 0.05 level.

Table 8

Percentage of Teachers Who Report Strong Support for Reform Proposals, Elementary v. Secondary Teachers

	Elementary Teachers	Secondary Teachers
Career ladders	78%	84%
Testing teachers on basic skills	77	76
Professional exams for credentialing	52	61
Relate salaries to teachers' effectiveness	38	48*
Peer evaluation	27	39*
Extra pay for fields of shortage	16	18

* Significant differences at <0.05 level.

Table 9

Percentage of Teachers Who Report Strong Support for Reform Proposals, Veteran v. New Teachers

	Veteran† Teachers	New†† Teachers
Career ladders	80%	74%
Testing teachers on basic skills	58	49
Professional exams for credentialing	58	49
Relate salaries to teachers' effectiveness	43	53
Peer evaluation	32	44
Extra pay for fields of shortage	15	24*

† Eleven or more years teaching.
†† Less than 5 years teaching.
* Significant differences at < 0.05 level.

Appendix B
Methodology

During the second week of May 1985, questionnaires were mailed to 1,100 California classroom teachers. A total of 809 usable questionnaires (72%) were returned.

The sample group represented equal numbers of rural, suburban, and urban teachers. Characteristics of the teachers who returned the survey closely match those of the statewide teacher population. Because of the large number of returned questionnaires, teacher opinions can be reliably compared by experience, grade level, location, and school size.

Sampling Procedures

The 176,000 classroom teachers in California pose a challenging sampling problem. They are spread across 1,029 school districts in over 7,000 schools. The only complete list of teacher names and addresses belongs to the State Teachers Retirement System. For reasons of confidentiality, that list is inaccessable.

However, the Market Data Retrieval Corporation offers a mailing list containing the names, addresses, and background information of 127,000 California teachers (74%). Established public opinion firms such as Gallup, and Harris, have routinely used this same list of teachers.

Although Market Data Retrieval (MDR) did not guarantee that its list represents an unbiased sample, the characteristics of MDR's teachers closely match those of all California teachers. MDR provided a randomly selected list of 1,100 names and addresses of California teachers. Equal numbers came from rural, suburban, and urban schools. In addition, MDR furnished background information for each teacher, including school names, school enrollments, grade levels, and student characteristics.

Distribution Procedures and Return Rates

For mail surveys, format and distribution procedures determine return rates. Since a high rate of return was important, questionnaire design and distribution procedures were tailored for maximum returns. For example, the questionnaire was pilot tested with several groups of teachers to ensure that each question was clear and invited quick response.

Distribution procedures followed this sequence: First, each teacher on the MDR list received an introductory postcard one week before the survey packet arrived. This postcard explained the purposes of the survey and requested the teacher's cooperation. Second, during the second week in May, each teacher received a packet containing an explanatory letter signed by Dorman Commons, chair of the California Commission on the

Teaching Profession, plus a questionnaire and a stamped envelope. This return envelope was coded so that respondents could be identified. Third, during the fourth week in May, teachers who had not already returned their survey received a second complete packet with a letter indicating again the importance of their opinions.

The seventy-three percent return rate in this survey is unusually high for a sample of this size, diversity, and geographic distribution.

Sample Characteristics

The characteristics of sample respondents closely parallel those of the statewide teacher population. The probability that an individual teacher would receive a survey and then return it is not affected by age, ethnicity, or teaching level. Table 10 compares characteristics of sample teachers with statewide teachers. California Basic Education Data Systems (CBEDS) provided the information on statewide population characteristics.

Table 10

Sample and Population Characteristics Compared

	California†	Sample
Teaching Experience (years)		
1-3	22%	4% (0-2)*
4-5	8	6 (3-5)*
6-10	18	20
11-20	39	39
over 20	14	32
Age (years)		
25-34	25%	25%
35-44	33	33
45-54	27	27
over 55	14	14
Ethnicity		
Black	6%	6%
Hispanic	6	6
White	83	83

† Source: California Basic Education Data Systems.
* Different initial scale used on survey.

Appendix C

Questionnaire and Responses

Part I

This section asks you to indicate whether the condition described is present or absent in your school or classroom.

1. I have enough chairs and desks in my classroom for all of my students.

87% YES
10% NO
3% NOT APPLICABLE

2. I have enough textbooks to give one to every student.

67% YES
27% NO
6% NOT APPLICABLE

3. The administration provides my students with the basic learning materials (other than textbooks) they need.

72% YES
26% NO
2% NOT APPLICABLE

4. My school has an adequate room set aside for teachers to use to talk and meet with one another.

71% YES
29% NO
0% NOT APPLICABLE

5. A typewriter is readily available for my use at school.

71% YES
27% NO
2% NOT APPLICABLE

6. Duplicating equipment (ditto machine or copier) with paper and supplies is readily available for my use at school.

89% YES
11% NO
0% NOT APPLICABLE

7. I have convenient access to a private telephone at school.

54% YES
46% NO
0% NOT APPLICABLE

8. I am physically safe at my school.

95% YES
5% NO
0% NOT APPLICABLE

9. I have ready access to the audio-visual equipment I need to do my work.

79% YES
19% NO
1% NOT APPLICABLE

10. I have a daily preparation period within the work day.

63% YES
35% NO
2% NOT APPLICABLE

11. I have a classroom of my own where I can store materials and organize my teaching program.

86% YES
13% NO
1% NOT APPLICABLE

12. Professional support services (i.e., psychologist, social worker) are available to assist me when I have a problem with one of my students.

78% YES
21% NO
1% NOT APPLICABLE

Part II

This section asks you to assess each situation in 2 ways:
(1) should it happen and (2) does it happen?

13. Teachers at my school participate in determining what should be taught.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(2%)	(1%)	(1%)	(16%)	(80%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(3%)	(15%)	(41%)	(41%)

14. Teachers at my school help select the textbooks we use.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(1%)	(0%)	(0%)	(8%)	(90%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(2%)	(5%)	(23%)	(70%)

15. I can choose the way the furniture is arranged in my classroom.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(1%)	(0%)	(1%)	(6%)	(92%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(0%)	(1%)	(7%)	(92%)

16. Teachers in my school participate in determining the assignment of students to individual teachers' classes.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(5%)	(5%)	(7%)	(24%)	(60%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(13%)	(26%)	(33%)	(30%)

17. Administration considers my preferences in establishing my teaching assignment.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(1%)	(0%)	(0%)	(15%)	(84%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(4%)	(10%)	(44%)	(42%)

18. Faculty meetings are primarily sessions in which the principal reads memos and makes announcements.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(46%)	(26%)	(10%)	(12%)	(7%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(4%)	(23%)	(30%)	(42%)

19. The faculty at my school is involved in setting student routines (like bell schedules).

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(2%)	(2%)	(10%)	(29%)	(56%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(20%)	(22%)	(32%)	(26%)

20. The teachers and administrators at my school work together to establish student discipline policies.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(1%)	(1%)	(0%)	(13%)	(86%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(6%)	(18%)	(33%)	(42%)

21. When I have problems with a parent or students, the principal provides supportive assistance.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(0%)	(0%)	(1%)	(6%)	(93%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(2%)	(11%)	(28%)	(58%)

22. The administration builds in time during the workday when I can talk with colleagues about professional matters.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(1%)	(1%)	(5%)	(25%)	(68%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(24%)	(37%)	(25%)	(14%)

23. When I have problems with a student or parent, other teachers at my school provide assistance.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(2%)	(2%)	(6%)	(28%)	(63%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(6%)	(28%)	(44%)	(33%)

24. At my school there is a formal system of help and support for new teachers.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(1%)	(1%)	(2%)	(17%)	(79%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(19%)	(35%)	(32%)	(14%)

25. I improve my teaching skills by observing other teachers at my school.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(2%)	(2%)	(10%)	(33%)	(54%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(28%)	(38%)	(27%)	(6%)

26. Other teachers at my school observe my teaching and provide me with useful feedback.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(4%)	(3%)	(16%)	(34%)	(43%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(45%)	(34%)	(18%)	(3%)

27. In my school, teachers participate in determining the inservice programs.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(1%)	(1%)	(2%)	(24%)	(72%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(13%)	(23%)	(40%)	(23%)

28. At my school, innovation is supported with time and money.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(1%)	(1%)	(2%)	(25%)	(71%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(17%)	(35%)	(37%)	(11%)

29. Teachers at my school participate in selecting new teachers to come to the school.

(a) Should this happen?

STRONGLY DISAPPROVE		DON'T CARE		STRONGLY APPROVE
1	2	3	4	5
(6%)	(5%)	(11%)	(29%)	(49%)

(b) In your experience, does this happen?

NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1	2	3	4
(46%)	(21%)	(18%)	(15%)

Part III

This section asks for your judgement in specific professional areas. Rank the answer to each question on a five-point scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) stronly agree.

30. My students' parents support my efforts with reinforcement at home.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(6%)	(19%)	(38%)	(22%)	(15%)

31. My teaching is frequently interrupted by P.A. announcements, school notices, or similar activities.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(17%)	(21%)	(26%)	(18%)	(18%)

32. My students' parents respect my work as a teacher.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(3%)	(8%)	(26%)	(36%)	(27%)

33. The system used to evaluate my professional performance is fair.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(9%)	(11%)	(27%)	(34%)	(20%)

34. My evaluator knows the specific strengths and weaknesses of my teaching performance.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(11%)	(14%)	(23%)	(29%)	(23%)

35. After observing my teaching, my evaluator provides feedback that is useful to me.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(14%)	(14%)	(24%)	(24%)	(24%)

36. Teachers should be tested in basic reading, writing, and math before they are credentialed.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(8%)	(4%)	(11%)	(17%)	(60%)

37. Teachers should take a professional exam (like the bar exam, medical boards) before they are credentialed.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(15%)	(8%)	(19%)	(21%)	(36%)

38. Teachers' salaries should be related in part to teachers' effectiveness.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(25%)	(12%)	(20%)	(21%)	(23%)

39. Teachers should participate in the evaluation of their colleagues.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(30%)	(14%)	(23%)	(18%)	(15%)

40. Teachers in fields of shortage should be paid more than other teachers.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(55%)	(14%)	(13%)	(9%)	(9%)

41. Teachers should have a career ladder which allows them to earn more as they take on diversified professional responsibilities.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(4%)	(2%)	(13%)	(24%)	(57%)

42. I am teaching in a grade level/subject area in which I have expertise.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(2%)	(1%)	(3%)	(12%)	(82%)

43. It is difficult to maintain our instuctional program with the kinds of substitute teachers we get.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(14%)	(17%)	(27%)	(19%)	(23%)

44. I am treated with dignity and respect by the administration at my school.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(7%)	(8%)	(13%)	(26%)	(46%)

45. I feel I am making a significant difference in my students' lives.

STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	2	3	4	5
(0%)	(2%)	(13%)	(34%)	(51%)

Part IV

Answers to these questions will give us some specifics about you and your students.

46. I have been teaching for:

4% 2 years or less	39% 11-20 years
6% 3-5 years	32% more than 20 years
19% 6-10 years	

47. I have the following number of units beyond my B.A.:

2% 15 or fewer	19% 46-60
5% 16-30	61% more than 60
13% 31-45	

48. I am teaching the following grade level(s) this year (check 1 or more):

9% K	13% 4	22% 8	29% 11
13% 1	14% 5	28% 9	28% 12
11% 2	14% 6	28% 10	
14% 3	21% 7		

49. The percentage of students in my class(es) who are limited or non-English speaking is:

74% less than 10%	6% 26-49%	4% more than 75%
13% 10-25%	2% 50-75%	

50. The percentage of my students who receive special education services is:

67% less than 10%	3% 26-49%	7% more than 75%
22% 10-25%	2% 50-75%	

51. During the school year I supplement my teaching income with another job.

61% YES
39% NO

52. I consider myself a member of the following ethnic group:

3% Asian
4% Black
4% Hispanic
86% White
2% Other_____